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THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine of Western
Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Subscribers are requested to note that the address of the BUSINESS OFFICE has been changed, as published in the last issue. Hereafter, subscriptions, dues, requests for sample copies, and advertisements should be forwarded to JOSEPH GRINNELL, PASADENA, CAL. Other communications should be sent, as usual, to the EDITOR at PALO ALTO, CAL.

Now that the time is approaching when the A. O. U. Committee on Bird Protection will assail the legislatures of still unconquered states with its "model bird law," it is perhaps opportune to voice a rapidly growing sentiment against one objectionable feature of this measure.

If we mistake not the A. O. U. Bird Bill provides that everyone who wishes to secure a permit to collect non-game birds (or even to have them in his possession) for scientific purposes must first furnish bond to the amount of \$200, besides paying a fee for the procuring of a permit. In other words if we wish to go over the border from our free state into Oregon, for a week's collecting, we must first spend \$5.00 or so in hard cash and some two weeks in good time negotiating with a Security Company for the bond. Then we are in a position to pay an additional fee for an annual permit, which makes it lawful for us to take a few little song sparrows or wren-tits to determine their particular race. Presumably this clause of the bill was introduced in order that the state might have some hold on the recipient of the permit. But if the latter ever transgressed his rights so far as to forfeit his bond, why would he not equally fall under the penalty of the law? As a matter of fact everyone knows that the bonds are a piece of red-tape and that no one issuing them runs a bit of risk. Why then make them a necessity when they serve no useful purpose, and are besides decidedly expensive, particularly to non-residents who may not

have any good natured friends to come forward? In Florida, for instance, it is not lawful for a Surety Company to go on such a bond, so that a visitor may have to do some soliciting before he can lawfully 'ornithologize.'

The particular "zeal" of the A. O. U. Committee on Bird Protection is made up of erstwhile collectors, who, we should think, would have an eye for the interests of their fellow scientists. Almost without exception it is a positive hardship to secure a permit to collect in states where the A. O. U. bill has been accepted, particularly in the case of non-residents.

All the hue and cry for bird protection is well enough in its place, but the better balanced ornithologists are already beginning to ask, "Where is *Ornithology* to come in?" In some states, Vermont for example where only three permits to collect can be in force at once, the matter has been carried to absurd lengths. In Virginia there is no provision for granting permits whatsoever, so that the ornithologists of Washington City must and do continue to collect unlawfully. And Washington is an "Audubonian" center! These two examples among others are mentioned to show that even in bird protection intemperance is possible.

Our objection is not to sane Bird Protection. We do think, however, that it is a little far-fetched when a recognized student of birds must be subjected to delay, annoyance, and highway robbery if he wishes to collect for his own purposes, or for those of the Government. As a prominent bird man recently said: "I would rather see 1000 birds killed through lack of laws, than have one promising Ornithologist discouraged through hardships imposed by arbitrary legislation."

Fortunately our own state is still free, and it is largely to this fact that its exceptional ornithological activity is due. We need a good bird law here, but we of the Cooper Club are not criminals and do not require to be bonded when we seek the festive song sparrow or chickadee.

The A. O. U. Bird Bill with its present un-American and objectionable bond feature is a menace to legitimate ornithological activity, wherever in force: take this feature away and it is a good law.

At the July meeting of the Northern Division it was voted that hereafter in Club publications, more particularly in THE CONDOR, vernacular names when used should be followed by the scientific name, the sense of the resolution being in every case to establish the identity of the bird beyond a doubt. In popular articles where many names occur the Editor would suggest that contributors append a list of species at the end of the article, as in Mr. Kaeding's paper in the present issue. A text cluttered with trinomial profundity is often bombastic quite beyond the remedy of the author.

In a recent examination for an important ornithological position, the following answer was given, by one candidate, to the question, "Define migration." "Migration is the importation of birds and mammals for propagation"!